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Big Butte Road: A Route To Exploitation?

By Ryan Henson

Deep in the headwaters country of the middle fork of the Eel River lies the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness. The California Wilderness Act of 1984 expanded the area by 42,000 acres to encompass 175,000 acres of roadless lands. One of the areas the act added to the wilderness was part of the Big Butte Wilderness Study Area, managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The BLM had been studying the area's suitability as wilderness since early 1975, but in the nine years following the study until the area was declared wilderness in 1984, a controversy began that still rages today.

This controversy began in October 1975, when the BLM announced they would issue a logging road right-of-way to Louisiana-Pacific Corporation (LP). The road would bisect the wilderness study area from north to south in order to allow LP to reach its parcel of land on the western face of Big Butte Mountain. The BLM decision resulted in a great deal of protest from the public, and it eventually led to litigation between the Citizens Committee to Save Our Public Lands (CCSPL), and the BLM and LP.

Phil Barber, an activist with the CCSPL, felt that "the construction of a road would degrade the wilderness values being studied as well as prejudice the study itself." The Department of the Interior's Board of Land Appeals, as well as a federal court ruled that the road permit could be granted "partly based on the premise that if the Big Butte area were later declared wilderness, the road would be put to sleep," says Barber.

In the years following, LP built the road and logged the west face of Big Butte Mountain as well as the nearby inholdings of Richard Wilson, a rancher. Despite this, the Big Butte wilderness study progressed, and according to Barber and other activists, the BLM stated numerous times that "there

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Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, Mendocino National Forest.

Photo by Mark Palmer

How to Save Species?

By Stephanie Mandel

People care about endangered species, but the plight of hundreds of creatures is getting worse.

From Earth First! to the Department of Fish & Game, there is agreement that a lot of species are in worse trouble than ever. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) expired, technically, in 1985. Last year the reauthorizing bill died in the Senate, and this year it has been stuck in a Senate committee for six months. A lack of funding has meant that 3,000 species are backed up awaiting review for the endangered list. Most of the listed species do not have recovery plans yet.

Among those that are aware that the situation for species is getting worse, a number of creative species-saving projects are underway.

Spotted Owl Lawsuit

The northern spotted owl is an important test case where the wrong choice be-

tween political considerations and a species was made by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS).

In late 1987, the US F&WS' Endangered Species office declined to put the spotted owl on the endangered or threatened species lists, despite compelling evidence favoring such listing.

A lawsuit which seeks to get the owl listed as an endangered species has been filed by the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

The spotted owls' status is particularly controversial because the creatures live in old growth forests—those that timber companies most want to log for the large trees that have stood undisturbed for hundreds of years. The trouble is, preserving spotted owls means preserving old growth habitat, and there's not much left for owls and timber companies both. In fact, Sierra Club

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Roadless Area Salvaging Plan Too Greedy

By the South Fork Mountain
Defense Committee

The Forest Service would like to have some "black sales," as they are now calling them, in some of the few remaining roadless areas of the South Fork of the Trinity River. Citizens have until July 15 to comment on the salvage logging proposals.

Local Trinity County defenders of the watershed are asking people to support Alternatives one (1) or two (2), termed the "No Action" and "Rehabilitation" alternatives, respectively.

The 614,400-acre Trinity River sub-watershed is largely formed by the South Fork Mountain, which Ripley's "Believe-It-Or-Not" claims is the world's longest continuous ridge. If the south fork of the river continued in a straight line it would run north-northwest from the Yolla Bolly Mountains, straight through the Redwood Creek watershed, and enter the Pacific Ocean in Redwood National Park.

The watershed was once famed for its runs of salmon and steelhead, and has been the subject of numerous watershed restoration efforts. The river has parts in both the federal and state wild and scenic river systems and is also designated as a model continued on page 4

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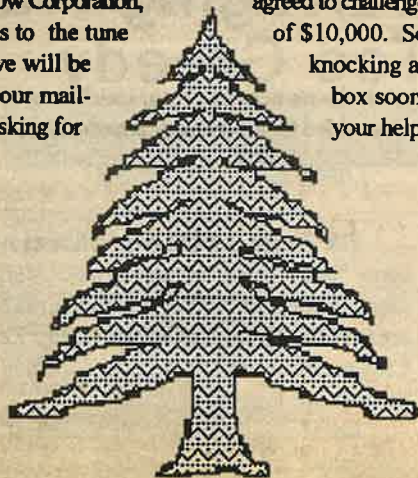
Report

By Jim Eaton

One of the founders of the Coalition has given us a grand opportunity to fund our ongoing efforts. But it will take your help!

Bob Schneider, former director (and president) of the CWC, talked to the good folks at Patagonia, the outdoor equipment and clothing manufacturer. Bob extolled the programs and projects of the Coalition and outlined the issues we plan to work on in the coming months and years. He promised that for every dollar Patagonia chose to grant us, we would raise at least an equal amount.

Well, Patagonia through their Lost Arrow Corporation, agreed to challenge us to the tune of \$10,000. So we will be knocking at your mailbox soon, asking for your help.



Patagonia Challenge



Matching Funds 7/1/88

We don't often ask our members for money, and we know that many of you recently have renewed your membership. But we will ask you to dig a little deeper this summer to help us out.

The funding will mean that the *Wilderness Record* will stay a timely monthly publication, that CWC will continue to defend our wildlands through legislation, appeals, and lawsuits, and that we will keep training old and new activists at seminars, workshops, and conferences.

And if you aren't a member, fill in the membership form on page 8 and join today!



The Memorial Day backpack for CWC volunteers wasn't planned as a snow trip! Paul Gran, Art Kulakow, and Ryan Henson enjoy a brisk morning in the Picayune Valley of the Granite Chief Wilderness. Photo by Jim Eaton

BLM Wilderness Workshop

"Getting Our Act Together
to Preserve California's Wilderness Diversity"

The California Wilderness Coalition and Sierra Club are hosting a two-day meeting on July 9-10, 1988 to coordinate the efforts of activists working to protect Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs).

Field work Saturday will include a boundary review of the Cache Creek Wilderness Study Area [led by activists in the Napa Group of the Sierra Club], including off-road vehicle problems, roadless areas, and developing a wilderness boundary. Plant and wildlife identification, geology, photography, and area narratives will be reviewed. Techniques and methods learned here may be applied to other WSAs.

Sunday's meeting will be a combina-

tion of transforming field work into maps and narratives as well as statewide strategy for eventual legislation. Specific subjects include how to draw and produce good maps; combining biological, geological, historical, and photographic information into narratives; updates on the California Desert Bill, Arcata Resource Management Plan, King Range Management Plan, Review Team, and the Alturas Resource Area Riparian Team; and a report from the Sierra Club's Napa Group on their work on proposed BLM wilderness areas [methods that can be applied to other areas].

More information is available from: Stan Weidert (916) 474-3180 or Jim Eaton (916) 758-0380.

Members Say:

Request for a Wilderness Map

Dear People:

I very much appreciate receiving *Wilderness Record* each month. This has become, for me, a regular source of information on the environmental issues that concern me the most. I hope that you will not only be able to keep on publishing monthly in the same quality fashion, but also cram even more information into each issue.

Have you thought about developing a map of California depicting the "environmental areas of concern" such as designated Wilderness Areas, WSAs, roadless areas, potential and actual wild and scenic rivers, etc.? I have a devil of a time finding some of the areas mentioned in the *Wilderness Record* on the maps which I have. Makes it truly difficult to try to become better informed. If you made a nice large and detailed map which a *Wilderness Record* reader could pull out and refer to, you might be able to offer it for sale as a little fundraiser, perhaps even offering it to retailers. Maybe Wilderness Press would be willing to assist.

Richard Pier
San Diego, CA

Dear Richard,

We considered, several years ago, printing a poster-sized map in color. After getting estimates on the cost (and anticipating our labor), we decided that it was not practicable at the time. I will bring this to the attention of the current Board of Directors to see if they think we again should look into this project.

The maps we use in the CWC office are a 1979 Forest Service map of roadless areas from the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) and the current BLM Wilderness Status Map. Although the Forest Service map is out-of-print, BLM's map is updated every year or so and is free. Contact your nearest BLM office or the California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, CA 95825.

The problem with the BLM map is that it shows only BLM wilderness study areas and designated wilderness of the agencies. Forest Service Roadless Areas, released and further planning areas, are not shown.

Many of these roadless areas were shown on BLM's 1981 map. However, the numerous wilderness areas designated in 1984 are not shown as wilderness, so the map can be confusing.

We have an intern working this summer on getting all the current roadless, wilderness, and wild river information on one map.

We'll see if there is a way of distributing this information.—J.E.

In the meantime, the CWC would be happy to send people a copy of the BLM's 1981 map (the one that's missing the 1984 wilderness areas.) Please send us \$1.25 for postage.

Facts Straightened

To Whom it May Concern:

In the May 1988 issue (Vol. 13, No. 5) of the *Wilderness Record*, you printed an article entitled "June Mtn. Ski Area Appeal." In the interest of fairness, the following changes in the figures represented in the third paragraph

would portray a much more accurate picture of our attempted "subterfuge." The Decision Notice approved a capacity increase from 2,250 to 5,000 skiers at one time. The existing 248 acres of ski runs would be increased by 89 additional acres and two (2) new lifts would be added.

We feel public scrutiny of Forest Service decisions is a healthy process that can only lead to a better product, however, we would appreciate an accurate review of the facts.

Bill Bramlette
District Ranger
Mono Lake Ranger District
Inyo National Forest

UPDATES

Deja' Vu—Lions Saved Again

Court Rejects Mountain Lion Hunt Report

Same cat channel, same cat threat. If you've been following the mountain lion hunting plans of the California Fish & Game Commission, this will sound like a rerun: the Superior Court has rejected the commission's report discussing the impacts of hunting lions this fall.

Judge Lucy Kelly McCabe, who also stopped last fall's hunt on similar grounds, ruled that the draft report was inadequate because it did not address all of the hunt's impacts and had not been circulated to the public.

Does this mean that 190 mountain lions are safe for another year? The commission has not yet announced its plans, but Sharon Negri of the Mountain Lion Preservation Foundation thinks that the commission could still want to pursue a hunting season this year. "In our opinion they may try another quick fix, but if they want to save face and do things right they had better wait."

A moratorium on hunting the cougars was in effect from 1971 to 1986.

Hetch Hetchy Plan Down, But Not Out

Congress is not inspired over the idea of restoring the drowned Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite National Park, but the environmental groups who support the idea are optimistic nevertheless.

The House Appropriations Committee's Interior Subcommittee denied \$600,000 for a study of the impacts of abandoning or destroying the O'Shaughnessy Dam on the Tuolumne River. No representatives supported the measure, although the Sierra Club and National Wildlife Federation endorsed it. On June 22 the Senate Appropriations Committee also deleted money for the study from their budget bill.

"It's not really anybody's priority except for [Interior Secretary Donald] Hodel," said Deborah Rohrer, a lobbyist for the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The Sierra Club's Mike McCloskey is not discouraged—"the operations of Hetch Hetchy are drawing more attention, what should happen there in the future is being discussed, and the idea of restoration is taking root."

Sidney Yates (D-III), chair of the House committee that denied the funding, has told reporters that "at this time I do not feel compelled to appropriate money for this purpose," implying that he might look upon it in a different light in the future.

Twelve northern California House members (Coehlo, Miller, Edwards, Dellums, Stark, Pelosi, Konyu, Boxer, Mineta, Panetta, Lantos, and Matsui) lobbied against funds for the study.

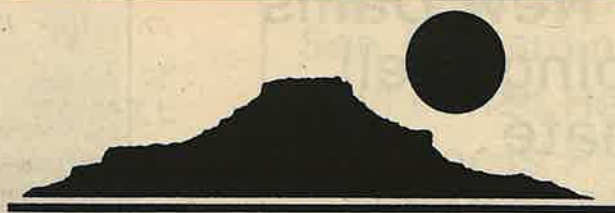
The State of California's Department of Water Resources was directed by 1987 legislation to conduct a preliminary study on the prospect of restoring the valley. The scope of this study has not yet been established, but it is expected to be much more limited and less costly than the ill-fated federal study.

San Francisco gets about 75 percent of its water from Hetch Hetchy Reservoir, and in recent years has earned about \$38 million annually from water and power sales.



Uncle Jim's Wilderness Trivia Quiz Question

The Devils Canyon—Bear
Canyon Primitive Area be-
came what wilderness
area?



Caples Creek Further Planning Area Boundary Change Held Up

Legislation that would have amended the 1984 California Wilderness Act to open up potential wilderness for a proposed dam project has been stopped in the Senate.

The boundary of the Caples Creek Further Planning Area in the El Dorado National Forest would have been contracted to exclude approximately 250 acres of land.

Representative Bruce Vento, Chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, said that "it is clear that the area in question was deliberately included in the planning area during this committee's work on the bill [the California Wilderness Act of 1984]. Under these circumstances, I see no reason why the Senate's amendment to HR 990 should receive any consideration."

HR 990 was originally introduced only to transfer lands near Ocotillo, California, to a local community college. The boundary change was added to the House-passed bill at the urging of Senator Pete Wilson (see article in the Jan. 1988 *WR*).

Congress Says No G-O Road This Year

The Gasquet-Orleans (G-O) Road will not be extended this year. Neither the House nor Senate budgets for 1989 includes funding for building more of the controversial road that cuts through the Siskiyou Mountains.

Court rulings still prohibit road construction until several violations of environmental law are cleared up, including a more adequate environmental impact statement and more study of possible water quality damage in violation of the Clean Water Act. (See the *WR*, May 1988 for more details.)

Appeals Court Will Reconsider Mono Lake Water Rights Victory Decision

Fish rights have been held at bay—for the moment. A state appeals court has agreed to reconsider a ruling that said fish flows must be maintained before the City of Los Angeles diverts water from the Mono Lake basin.

The May decision said that L.A.'s licenses to divert water must be reconsidered by the State Water Resources Control Board.

Mono Lake Committee spokeswoman Ilene Mandelbaum said she did not expect the rehearing to change the court's earlier opinion. The petition for a rehearing was based on errors in the court decision related "mainly to flows in the creeks and some timing as to occurrences of activities," according to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Group Sues Over Tule Elk Hunt

On behalf of the Committee for the Preservation of the Tule Elk, the Sacramento law firm of Remy and Thomas has filed a suit against the California Department of Fish and Game in Superior Court.

The animal preservation group is suing the Department for illegally authorizing the killing of 105 tule elk this fall. The Fish and Game Commission approved the hunting of tule elk, mountain lion, and bighorn sheep on April 8th at a hearing in Long Beach.

"The Department, in pursuing the hunting of these animals, failed to comply with several sections of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Also, state law now prohibits hunting tule elk until their numbers reach an estimated 2,000. The Department of Fish and Game contends this minimum population has been reached, but they have provided no evidence to support their estimates," said Charles Garner, President of the Committee.

The preservation group's goal in filing the suit is to get the state to relocate the condemned 105 tule elk to their historic ranges in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (42,600 acres), Vandenberg Air Force Base (98,000 acres), and Henry Coe State Park, Garner said. "Federal legislation protecting the elk emphasizes establishing many self-sustaining herds throughout the state," he added.

The tule elk—the smallest elk on the continent—have begun to make a comeback from the brink of extinction. At one time the animals had roamed from Mount Shasta down through the Central Valley to Ventura County and along the coast between those two points, but were hunted down in the late 1800s. The species was saved by a rancher who protected elk on his property from hunters. California passed legislation in 1971 to protect these rare mammals, and the federal government followed with its own similar legislation in 1976.

Damn New Dams Bill Doing Well in Senate

More drowned river canyons in national parks? Maybe never again—prospects look good for HR 1173, erroneously known as the Dam Parks bill, which prohibits construction of new dams within national parks.

Hearings on the bill were held on June 16 by the Senate Energy Committee, where a surprise boost was given by California Senator Pete Wilson, who arrived unexpectedly and testified supportively. American Rivers, The Wilderness Society, and Sierra Club also testified in favor of HR 1173, which is authored by Representative Richard Lehman of Sanger, CA, near Fresno.

Discussion at the hearings focused on expanding the bill's protection for the National Park System to national recreation areas and national monuments.

Almost every national park in California has some designated wilderness in it, and a majority of the acreage of Lassen Volcanic, Sequoia-Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks and Devils Postpile, Lava Beds, and Joshua Tree National Monuments are official wilderness.

Water districts in the Bay Area have lobbied against the bill, and Colorado River development interests weakened it between the 99th and 100th Congresses, making it applicable only to new dams and not to enlarging existing dams. The expansion of O'Shaunnessy dam in Yosemite National Park, however, is prohibited by the bill. The City of San Francisco is not expected to oppose the legislation, although Mayor Diane Feinstein has been against it in the past.

The U.S. Forest Service testified, asking to be exempt from the bill's restrictions.

The bill awaits a vote of the full Senate, which had not been scheduled as of the *WR* press date. "We're optimistic that it will pass the 100th Congress," said Ron Stork of Friends of the River.



Monache Meadows, southeast of the Golden Trout Wilderness, has become a favorite place for Off-Road Vehicles. View from Brown Mountain looking south. Photo by Tim Sherburn

Inyo National Forest Sneaks Out ORV Plan for Monache Meadows

The Sierra Club has appealed a plan to build new off-road vehicle (ORV) routes in the Inyo National Forest's Monache Meadows. The meadow's status was hotly contested during the debates over the California Wilderness Act of 1984 and finally they were left out of the South Sierra Wilderness at the insistence of Senator Pete Wilson.

The decision to turn Monache Meadows into an ORV playground was signed by the Inyo forest supervisor in February, after the preparation of an environmental assessment. Environmental groups were not notified of the proposal, despite years of concern over

the preservation of the area.

"I only learned of the decision by rumor," said Joe Fontaine of the Sierra Club's Kern-Kaweah Chapter; "to my knowledge the Sierra Club was not officially notified of this decision." Nor was the California Wilderness Coalition notified of the decision. The CWC is asking to intervene in the appeal.

ORV routes criss-cross the South Fork of the Kern River, a recent addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The Forest Service is assuming that this stretch of the river will be designated "scenic" rather

than "wild," allowing ORVs in the area. The Sequoia National Forest will write the Wild & Scenic river management plan.

The Forest Service admits that this project will have a negative impact on the Monache deer herd. Disturbance to the deer was a major reason that a proposal by Phillips Petroleum to conduct geothermal drilling was denied several years ago.

Despite the impacts on the deer and obvious public controversy over the use of ORVs in the meadow, the forest supervisor concluded that an environmental impact statement was not needed for the project.

Your thoughts on ORV trails in Monache Meadow may be sent to the Forest Supervisor, Inyo National Forest, 873 N. Main St., Bishop, CA 93514.



South Fork Roadless Area continued from page 1

steelhead stream by the Forest Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, and California Trout, an angling group.

On the east slope of South Fork Mountain dense stands of old-growth Douglas fir are found along with concentrations of spotted owl territories. As one continues east across the river, the stands change to reflect the generally drier nature of the environment. Here old coniferous trees are found to dominate the sites, but the stands are less dense and contain incense cedars and ponderosa pines among a diversity of hardwood and brush species, interspersed with clear-cuts.

The lower part of the South Fork watershed was logged extensively on private lands in the post-WWII housing boom. During the big floods of 1955 and 1964 extensive water-

shed scouring and damage was done generally where the area of roadbuilding and logging had occurred. This, in turn, led to extensive degradation in some places, with filling of the deep pools in the stream's main channel. This means less cool, deep water habitat for the young salmonids during the

drought season, when some stream sections appear to dry up completely.

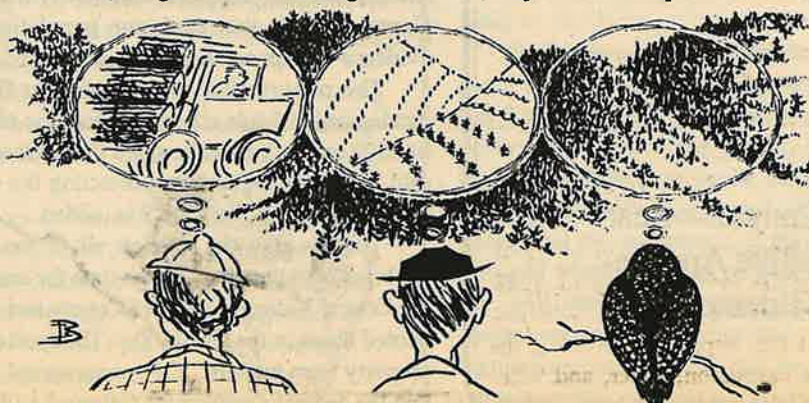
The Shasta-Trinity National Forest proposes to allow extensive salvage logging in some of the last pristine forest in the upper-watershed. Even though some of the trees are dead, they continue to provide coarse woody

debris that plays a vital role in the old-growth forest ecosystem.

The watershed, parts trashed and parts not, offers an important biological corridor between the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness and Redwood National Park—perhaps unfragmenting the ancient old-growth forests will become a national goal someday.

The Forest Service would allow logging in spotted owl territories, lands unsuitable for growing trees, and even on active landslides.

The fires that burned into late September of 1987 after an unusual regionwide August dry lightning storm have already contributed to a large number of salvage timber sales in the forest's Hayfork Ranger District, many on the harsh sites east of the river.



continued on page 5

Big Butte Road continued from page 4

the BLM stated numerous times that "there will be a one-time-only timber sale on adjacent private lands, and if the study determines that the Big Butte area should be designated a wilderness area, then the road will be put to sleep."

But after the area joined with the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness in 1984, the BLM made no attempt to put the road to sleep, claiming that Congress had ordered them to provide reasonable access to the landowners in the area. Ellen Drell, also an activist with CCSOPL, contends that "adequate access is provided by a jeep trail that traverses the ridge above the Big Butte road, and it has served that purpose for years prior to the completion of the Big Butte logging road."

As Drell and other activists see it, the problem is that Richard Wilson, a cattleman no longer satisfied with mere ranching (an activity for which the jeep road was adequate access), is now operating a lucrative hunting resort on his property, and many of his clients use their 4-wheel drive vehicles to get to his land by utilizing the Big Butte Road. She also says that during Congressional hearings on the Wilderness Bill Congress ordered the BLM to allow Wilson

"The road cannot be put to sleep until the BLM acquires all the private property within the Big Butte area."

access for his cattle operations under the auspices of continuing historical use. But at no time during all the testimony did Congress say that Wilson could extend this right of motorized access to dozens of hunters. Because of this, the CCSOPL takes the stand that if Richard Wilson wants to run a resort, he should have to shuttle people back and forth in his vehicle or use horses. But, according to Ellen Drell, even this is open to question, for "Wilson, by not sticking to cattle operations, is abusing his right to historical use, as well as violating the spirit of the California Wilderness Act of 1984. A court decision may be necessary to restrict the Big Butte area to true historical uses (use by only the individual inholders themselves), and to decommission the Big

Butte Road."

In 1986, the BLM issued its Draft Interim Management Plan for the Big Butte Wilderness addition. In it, the BLM stated that "the Big Butte road will be left open so that private landowners will be assured of reasonable access to their property." In addition to this, the document states that "the road cannot be put to sleep until the BLM acquires all the private property within the Big Butte area."

A final management plan for the Big Butte addition has not yet been released, and the BLM is still standing its ground on the policy to leave the road open. Al Wright, District Manager with the BLM in Ukiah, supports the BLM decision, saying that "the jeep road may look stable on the surface, but it is actually undermined by fragile soils." He also notes that the jeep road would have to be realigned to accommodate the increased traffic, an act which "our soil scientist and engineer feel will destabilize the road, resulting in increased erosion." In addition to this, Wright says that the "jeep road has a half-mile of hazardous 35-40 percent grades, plus the fact that we feel it is better to have two separate routes in order to keep hikers and vehicles apart."

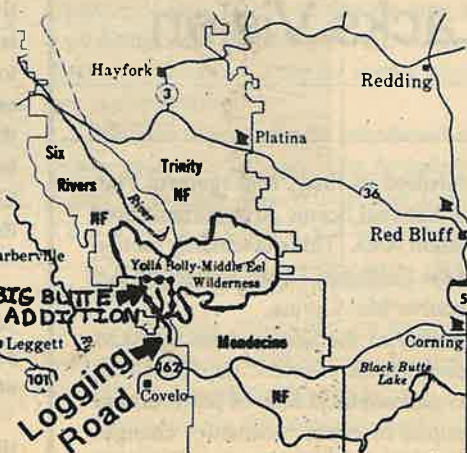
Instead of getting rid of the road, which would involve the removal of culverts and a great deal of soil movement by heavy equipment, something that he feels would cause more damage to the environment than keeping it open, he proposes numerous measures to mitigate the effect of the road. These mitigation measures, according to Wright, will be aimed at "making the road more primitive in appearance," an act involving scarifying the road surface to allow vegetative recovery, as well as planting trees on the highly visible northwest side of the road, and painting the roads culverts to blend in with the soil. He also states that it is his intention to change

"The jeep road may look stable on the surface, but it is actually undermined by fragile soils."

the Big Butte Road from a two-lane road to a one lane road, with turnouts provided, as well as reducing the jeep trail to a hiking trail. All of this will be accompanied by a strict permit system, according to Wright, whereby only the individual landowners themselves will have vehicular access.

its rehabilitation program.

Comments are due to the Forest Supervisor, Shasta-Trinity National Forest, South Fork DEIS Comments, 2400 Washington Ave., Redding CA 96001 by July 15, 1988. Comments are needed to build an administrative record that supports protecting the environments vegetation, water, and wildlife.



Lastly, Wright feels that the decision to keep the road open, although admittedly at odds with the BLM's prior commitment, was "the best possible decision to make based on Congressional mandate, the advice of my staff, and my own observations." As yet the BLM has not been able to reach Wilson through his lawyer to propose its mitigation measures to Wilson.

In the end, while the proposals and counter proposals are presented, the Big Butte road still winds unimpeded, coming from the south straight through the heart of this addition to the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, clearly visible as a scar on the land. It is apparent that as long as the road remains in its present form, without either its total closure or the implementation of severe mitigation measures, the road serves as a constant reminder of the threat of further exploitation.

Ryan Henson is a volunteer with the CWC who is studying political science at American River College in Sacramento.

Public Comment Time San Bernardino Nat'l Forest Revising Wilderness Plans

The San Bernardino National Forest is revising Wilderness Management Plans for their four wilderness areas—the San Gorgonio, San Jacinto, Santa Rosa, and Cucamonga wilderness areas. Public input on wilderness issues and concerns will be accepted until December 31, 1988.

Interested citizens may request information packages from the following ranger districts: San Gorgonio Ranger District, 34701 Mill Creek Road, Mentone, CA 92359 (San Gorgonio Wilderness); San Jacinto Ranger District, 54270 Pine Crest, P.O. Box 518, Idyllwild, CA 92349 (San Jacinto and Santa Rosa wildernesses); Mount Baldy Ranger District, 110 N. Wabash Avenue, Glendora, CA 91740 (Cucamonga Wilderness); or Cajon Ranger District, Lytle Creek Road, Star Route Box 100, Fontana, CA 92336 (also Cucamonga Wilderness).

Citizens may submit recommendations or concerns about a specific wilderness area to the individual district office which administers it.

Forest Recreation Officer Bill Makel explained the purpose of the plan: "Our challenge in managing these wildernesses is to perpetuate natural conditions while providing visitors the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation."

The San Bernardino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, which will include wilderness management stuff, is expected to be completed by the end of this summer.

For additional information, contact the Forest Supervisor's office at (714) 383-5588.



Wilderness Trivia Answer:

-from page 3-

In 1968 Congress approved the 36,137-acre San Gabriel Wilderness in the Angeles National Forest, adding 2,490 acres of contiguous land to the old Devils Canyon—Bear Canyon Primitive Area.

South Fork Roadless Area from page 4

The South Fork Mountain Defense Committee estimates that what the Forest Service proposes in its preferred alternative will cost the taxpayer more than \$700,000 even before considering the costs of the environmental damage to the watershed and





Alluvial fans from the northeast flank of Clark Mountain, in the East Mojave Scenic Area.
Photo by the US Geological Survey

East Mojave Plan Lacks Vision

By Jim Eaton

The Bureau of Land Management [BLM] has released its final "Management Plan and Environmental Assessment" for the East Mojave National Scenic Area administered by the BLM as part of the California Desert Conservation Area. This outstanding section of desert has been proposed as a new national park in the California Desert Protection Act introduced by Senator Alan Cranston and Representative Mel Levine.

Environmentalists concerned about lax management of the Scenic Area by BLM will not be mollified by their plan. Although it presents some cosmetic modifications, the management plan shows no overall vision and no philosophical idea of protection or enhancement of the area's park-like character (examples of minor "cosmetic" changes are plans to post signs, build a new trail, publish guide brochures, landscape campsites, and reduce width of roadside camping corridors).

The only strong action proposed by BLM now is said to be a mistake. Environmentalists were pleased to note in the draft plan that BLM planned to "eliminate the use" of all-terrain vehicles in the East Mojave. Unfortunately, BLM now claims that this was an error and that they meant to "allow limited" rather than "eliminate" use.

There are 235 miles of paved roads and 325 miles of graded roads maintained by either San Bernardino County, BLM, or private interests both within and bordering the Scenic Area. Additionally, there are hundreds of routes totaling over 2,500 miles which are maintained primarily by the passage of vehicles, including a number of unmaintained trails within Wilderness Study Areas. BLM's plan for controlling vehicles is so anemic that they admit "the number of routes closed or proposed for closure in the East Mojave is relatively minor in relation to the number of routes which will remain open."

Groups and individuals have criticized BLM for emphasizing consumptive uses like mining and grazing in this area that deserves national park status. BLM responded that "if there appears to be a 'bias' in the plan towards consumptive uses, it is because the laws BLM operates under requires [sic] that the public lands be made available for multiple-use with sustained yield."

BLM reaffirmed its intention to "keep as much of the East Mojave available to mineral exploration and development as possible..." They even apologized for giving the impression that mining in the East Mojave is nearing its end: "there is every indication that the opposite is true, that mining activity just getting started in the area will far exceed the level of activity which occurred at the turn of the century and into the 1920s."

In response to concerns about grazing these fragile desert lands, BLM responded that "it appears questionable how detrimental cattle have been to this area, since after 100 years of continuous grazing, the region still maintains its primitive, scenic character." Suggestions to keep cattle out of sensitive areas were met with "a fence would be necessary to keep livestock out of any large area, such as the Kelso Dunes or hiking trails. However, the costs of constructing and maintaining such a fence would be prohibitive."

Environmentalists complained that BLM failed to consider eliminating all shooting not associated with hunting in order "to accommodate the large number of visitors who come to the East Mojave to pursue this activity..." BLM defended this position by stating that "most of the individuals who were contacted felt that a division between hunting-related shooting and target shooting or plinking was artificial and not enforceable in any practical way."

It is clear from the management plan that BLM does not consider a "National Scenic Area" under their administration to be much different from other lands managed for multiple use with sustained yield. BLM has had its chance to show its vision for the East Mojave National Scenic Area, and it is a blurry mirage. Proper management of the area will require the transfer of the land to the National Park Service, an agency that understands how our national treasures are to be preserved.

Saving Species

continued from page 1

experts say that no more acres of old-growth forest could be cut without risking extinction of the owl, not to mention ignored large mammals like the Pacific fisher and marten, which have even wider old-growth territory requirements.

While the spotted owl lawsuit will have ramifications for other species, the F&WS has been sued a number of times before over its decisions.

Earth First! Biodiversity Project

A sweeping legal challenge to destructive practices is gearing up in the western states. "We're winning and we're not going to stop," said Jasper Carlton. Carlton is hot on the trail of saving species—about 256 of them. As a leader of the Earth First!s project to save ecosystems, the Biodiversity Project, Carlton is talking about lawsuits—lots of them.

While administrative channels are being used first, EF! is prepared to file separate complaints with an overriding ecosystem pleading on behalf of a large number of endangered species.

The group has been successful in settling species suits out of court. One such victory was getting the caribou listed in Idaho in 1986—the *only* emergency listing of a species under the Reagan administration. "A lot of the stuff we do isn't in law libraries," Carlton said.



ies," Carlton said.

Ultimately, the group wants a system of new national biological preserves, managed only for biological considerations (see the March 1988 *WR*). They are focusing on four ecosystems in the west. (A similar project for the Sierra has been undertaken by the Beckwitts, a family living outside of Nevada City, CA.)

Carlton is adamant. "We don't give a damn about the economic consequences of this," he said. "We'll put vast areas of land under court order. The bottom line is the biological integrity of public lands."

He has faith that Americans do not understand the seriousness of the extinction rate, and when they learn of what is happening, will not stand for the weakening of current endangered species law. This is a legitimate concern, if the law begins to become a serious obstacle to development.

Jim Eaton of the California Wilderness Coalition puts it this way: "The Endangered Species Act is like having a nuclear weapon in your arsenal. It's so strong that people are afraid of the after-effects of using it."

Richard Spotts of Defenders of Wildlife also cautions that court victories can be overturned by Congress. Spotts wonders if conservationists should put more focus on alternatives to the legal system, executive branch, and Congress, such as California's Proposition 70 initiative. The ballot measure, which passed last month, funds endangered species programs and critical habitat preservation. Maine and Massachusetts

"We'll put vast areas of land under court order."

have passed similar initiatives.

Spotts points out that initiatives take advantage of a broad base of popular support. With lawsuits, he adds, "you have to overwhelm the other side with legwork and data to increase the chances of winning." Still, Defenders of Wildlife is considering suing on behalf of the yellow-billed cuckoo, which he calls a "miner's canary" for riparian systems.

Other approaches Spotts likes were those in "Sliding Toward Extinction," a report by a Sacramento-based consulting firm (see *WR*, January 1988). The report recommends giving state agencies more leeway to conduct environmental impact reviews *before* development begins, extending the protection of endangered species on public lands to include those on private lands, and broadening the endangered species listing process.

Whatever strategies are used, there is wide agreement that species

are in trouble. Officials in federal agencies and the American public will have to make difficult decisions between development and politics and the other creatures with whom we share ecosystems.



Backcountry Management in Yosemite

Take Only Pictures, Leave No Footprints

By Garrett De Bell

Being loved to death has always been a hazard for wilderness. While logging, mining and roadbuilding probably remain the biggest threats to wilderness, hikers and backpackers can inadvertently harm the wilderness they love. Only recently have resource managers in Yosemite recognized the serious damage caused by off-trail hiking or cross-country travel in heavily used wilderness areas. The same threat exists wherever areas become sufficiently popular.

It is easy to see the appeal of off-trail hiking. Avoid the crowds, litter, and evidence of human presence just by taking a route off designated trails. For a number of years I taught courses on natural history and backpacking techniques. The course I considered most enjoyable was "cross-country backpacking." In this class I would take a small group on a route away from the major trail network and teach skills of route finding, map reading and survival. Over the span of just three years I realized that my favorite route had been transformed from untracked wilderness to a less pristine character by the creation of very distinct "volunteer" trails. Who was the culprit? Not some faceless corporation, but hundreds of dedicated wilderness lovers out to find a unique off-trail experience.

Reluctantly, I decided that promoting such off-trail use by teaching people how to do it was seriously damaging the wilderness and perhaps, even more so, the very wilderness experience we were all striving for.

Does this mean that off-trail hiking and backpacking should be criminalized? I hope not. I believe that using minimum impact techniques and playing down this type of use can keep the impacts to an acceptable level. If only those who become skilled and experienced enough to figure out routes on their own were to travel off trail, then perhaps the numbers would be small enough for the wilderness to withstand. If well-intentioned trip leaders, recreation instructors, naturalists, and guidebook publishers continue to promote off-trail hiking as the way to escape civilization and enjoy the wilderness, then the wilderness will be harmed and controls

will be necessary.

Yosemite, one of the most popular wilderness areas in the country, experiences these impact problems due to the crush of numbers of visitors. Fortunately, dedicated resource managers and backcountry rangers work hard to find solutions to minimize the inevitable impacts of wilderness use. Thus bear cables, fireless camping, and the "pack it out" ethic have become commonplace in this and many other national parks and wilderness areas.



To deal with the threat of ever-increasing volunteer trails from off-trail backpacking, a number of steps have been taken and more are under consideration. The promotion of off-trail hiking by any group is discouraged. With the exception of a few "historic trails, all groups are restricted to no more than eight individuals if travelling off-trail. Groups of up to twenty-five may travel on established trails. Some user groups complain that the eight-person limit make it uneconomical to operate trips. Exactly. So stay on the trails.

Groups under the direct control of the National Park Service, including park inter-



preters and concessionaires such as the Yosemite Park and Curry Co.'s mountaineering school are prohibited from offering off-trail backpacking. All routes utilized must be approved by the NPS Backcountry Manager. Encouraging publishers of guidebooks to delete off-trail routes from their publications is presently being given consideration. If voluntary restraint isn't enough,

then a boycott of guidebooks promoting off-trail hiking would become another consideration.

Let's recognize the trail as the most important tool in preserving wilderness. Use it and leave off-trail travel to those with enough dedication, interest, and experience to figure it out for themselves. We don't need to drag every first-time backpacker off trail just to show how clever we are. Experience can be gained on the trails (over 700 miles in Yosemite) and the wilderness left unimpaired.

Garrett De Bell, an environmental consultant to the Yosemite Park and Curry Co., co-authored the Environmental Handbook, published in 1970 by Friends of the Earth.

Forest Service Lets Resorts Off Easy

"Problems with the Fee System for Resorts Operating on Forest Service Land," a report by the U.S. General Accounting Office, RCED 88-94.

Fees paid by resorts using U.S. Forest Service land are much too low, according to this report.

Private resorts studied include June Lake Junction, east of Yosemite, Lakeview Resort, near Mono Lake, and Mammoth Mountain, east of Fresno.

The General Accounting Office (GAO), Congress' watchdog agency, found that about 640 resort businesses holding Forest Service permits paid the government about two percent of their gross sales in 1985.

To order a copy of the report, call or write the GAO: (202) 275-6241; P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877. The first five copies are free, additional copies are \$2.00 each. Include the code RCED 88-94 with your order.

CALENDAR

July 9 Comments due on the Forest Service's interim rules for appeals that relate to "catastrophic events," like fire salvage timber sales. Write to: F. Dale Robertson, Chief, USDA, Forest Service, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

July 9, 10 *California BLM Wilderness: Getting our Act Together to Preserve California's Wilderness Diversity*, a workshop sponsored by the CWC and Sierra Club, held in Davis. Focus on coordinating efforts of activists working to protect Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas. For more information call Stan Weidert (916) 474-3180 or Jim Eaton (916) 758-0380. RSVP.

July 12 Comments due on proposed Forest Service appeal regulations. Write to: F. Dale Robertson, Chief, USDA, Forest Service, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090. (See article in the June WR.)

July 18 Comments due on the South Fork [Mountain roadless area] Fire Recovery/Salvage Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Send to: Forest Supervisor, Shasta-Trinity National Forests, 2400 Washington Ave., Redding, CA 96001. For more information, also contact the South Fork Mountain Defense Committee at (707) 442-0208. (See article on page 1.)

July 25 *Conservation of Diversity in Forest Ecosystems: A Symposium*, sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service; University of California, Davis. Call Connie Millar, (415) 486-3133 or Larry Riggs, (415) 548-3131 for more information.

Purposes of the California Wilderness Coalition

...to promote throughout the State of California the preservation of wild lands as legally designated wilderness areas by carrying on an educational program concerning the value of wilderness and how it may best be used and preserved in the public interest, by making and encouraging scientific studies concerning wilderness, and by enlisting public interest and cooperation in protecting existing or potential wilderness areas.



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